

HOUSE BILL 1918

By Rinks

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 2,  
Chapter 3, relative to vote centers.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 2, Chapter 3, is amended by adding the following new part and designating it as following:

PART 3 – VOTE CENTERS

Section 2-3-301.

(a) The purpose of this part is to establish vote centers in counties to allow voters to vote at any vote center in the county in which the voter is registered irrespective of the voter's precinct.

Section 2-3-302.

(a) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, a county election commission may establish a program which allows the county to combine precincts or polling places or establish one or more vote centers for any election.

(b) If vote centers are used in an election in a county, precinct polling places shall not also be used in the election in that county.

(c) For municipal elections not held in conjunction with a regularly scheduled county, state, or federal election, the county election commission shall establish a vote center within the municipality.

(d) Each vote center used in a county shall have a secure electronic connection to the computerized voter registration system maintained by the county election commission permitting all voting information processed by any computer at a vote center to be immediately accessible to all other computers at all vote centers in the county. A county may not use vote centers in an election unless the coordinator of elections has

approved that county for use of vote centers and has certified that the secure electronic connection is sufficient to prevent any voter from voting more than once and to prevent unauthorized access to the computerized voter registration system.

(e) Prior to establishing any vote center in a county, a super majority of at least four (4) of the five (5) county election commissioners must approve the vote center program. This super majority will also be required to establish the number and locations of vote centers in each county. Unless four (4) out of five (5) county election commissioners vote in favor of the vote center program and the number and location of the vote centers, the voting precincts as described in § 2-3-103 must be utilized.

(f) Each vote center shall meet all applicable federal and state laws including the Help America Vote Act accessibility requirements.

(g) The provisions of chapter 7 of this title apply to all vote centers.

Section 2-3-303.

The county election commission, after taking into consideration all facts and circumstances, shall determine the number of vote centers at each election. In no event shall there be less than one (1) vote center for every twenty-five thousand (25,000) registered voters.

Section 2-3-304.

If the county election commission combines polling places, precincts or establishes one (1) or more vote centers in their county, the county election commission shall publish in a newspaper of general circulation the location of the vote centers no less than thirty (30) days before the election. The county election commission shall mail to each voter whose polling place is changed a notice of the voter's new vote center location. Furthermore, immediately after any establishment of a vote center, the county

election commission shall give written notification of such changes to the office of local government, comptroller of the treasury and to the coordinator of elections.

Section 2-3-305.

The provisions of T.C.A. § 2-3-107 shall apply to vote centers.

Section 2-3-306.

The voting period for all vote centers shall begin on the twentieth day before the day of the election and shall continue through the day of the election. Vote centers shall be closed on all Sundays and state holidays in the voting period.

Section 2-3-307.

(a)

(1) the county election commission office shall be open a minimum of three (3) consecutive hours each weekday including Saturdays between the hours of eight o'clock a.m. (8:00 a.m.) and six o'clock p.m. (6:00 p.m.) prevailing time during the voting period established in this part. For a municipality with a population of less than five thousand (5,000) according to the 1990 federal census or any subsequent federal census, the municipal governing body may determine the Saturday schedule of the voting period for municipal elections.

(2) If the proper notice under subsection (c) is made, a county election commission may close its office on a state holiday during the voting period established for the vote center.

(b)

(1) On at least three (3) days during this voting period for those offices listed in § 2-13-202, or for any state or federal election, the county election commission office shall remain open between four-thirty p.m. (4:30 p.m.) and eight o'clock p.m. (8:00 p.m.) in the eastern time zone and seven o'clock p.m.

(7:00 p.m.) in the central time zone, and on at least one (1) Saturday during the same period the office shall be open from eight o'clock a.m. (8:00 a.m.) to four o'clock p.m. (4:00 p.m.). The county election commission shall determine the appropriate dates for both late and regular hours at the commission office.

(c) Notice of the office hours shall be given by the county election commission not less than thirty (30) days prior to the day of election by publication in a newspaper of general circulation.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2007, the public welfare requiring it.